

# Mejora de la lengua

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## Purposes:

Being “proficient” in another language is an ongoing task – or should be! This assignment is designed to help you in the following ways:

- Many states require all prospective world language teachers to achieve a minimum of “advanced low” proficiency (“advanced mid” for dual immersion teachers in UT)
- As a world language teacher, one of your most important jobs is to model the target language – if you don’t feel comfortable interacting in the target language, you won’t feel comfortable teaching in it.
- If you expect your students to be active language learners, you need to be an active language learner yourself.
- Paying attention to your own language acquisition process will help you be more aware of your students’ language development.
- As you actively seek out opportunities and resources for refining your target language proficiency, you will discover useful strategies and resources that can be applied in your teaching.
- As you think carefully about your language acquisition process, theories about second language acquisition will make more sense.
- New technologies are changing the landscape of foreign language learning and teaching. The best teachers of the future will know how to harness these new resources. As you participate in this assignment, you’ll discover some of these possibilities.

## Instructions:

Each of you has specific needs, learning preferences, and goals related to your target language competency. Therefore, each of you will go about this task in a unique way. The sky’s the limit! Here are a few guidelines to consider as you propose your *Plan de práctica*.

- You may work alone, or in groups.
- Try to devote small, but frequent chunks of time to your language improvement.
- Create a well-balanced “menu” of language practice for yourself that draws on all three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational).
- Explore new technologies as tools for improving proficiency.
- Use native speakers as practical resources.
- Consider using this assignment as an opportunity to prepare activities for your future students.
- Log your practice activities using the *Mejora de la lengua Log Sheet* and turn it in on the last Friday of each month.
- Take time to post resources that you have found useful to the wiki <http://languagelinks2006.wikispaces.com/TLRP+Resources+2007#toc4>
- Find ways to make this FUN for yourself! If it is a chore, you are unlikely to make time for it!

## Evaluation:

## Part 1: Log Sheet & Evaluation Rubric

Use your log sheet to self-evaluate your performance. Submit your log sheet and the accompanying self-evaluation rubric on the last Friday of each month (or as directed on the syllabus).

- ❑ Frequency and consistency of activities
- ❑ Integration of technology
- ❑ Utilization of native language speakers/resources
- ❑ Potential for the plan to yield substantial improvement in your target language proficiency
- ❑ Activities go beyond your typical classroom experience

## Part 2: Discussion Board Postings & Resources

You will be in a *Mejora de la lengua* group. Each month, post a paragraph or two (either to the wiki or to Blackboard) commenting on your *Mejora de la lengua* experiences for that month. You can choose one aspect to discuss or you can write generally about your experience. Those who are not sure what to write may wish to consider the following questions:

- Which practice activities did you enjoy the most?
- What did you learn about Spanish from them?
- What did you learn about teaching from them?
- What didn't work? Why? How do you know?
- What connections did you make between these experiences and the concepts and theories we have been discussing in class?
- What are the aspects from your experience that you could apply to your future work as a classroom teacher?

Remember that this is a discussion board, so feel free to ask questions and seek advice/ideas from the other members of your group. A sample discussion board post appears below:

My biggest surprise was how easy it was to understand Spanish TV and how hard it was to have a conversation with my friends entirely in Spanish. We kept wanting to slip into English and I found myself not saying things because I didn't have the Spanish vocab to express myself without feeling stupid. Luckily, Melissa forced us to stick to the task for about an hour; otherwise, we would have given up for sure. My experience highlights for me some of the difficulties involved in teaching in the target language. I'm sure my students will feel the same way I did when I ask them to have discussions or do activities in Spanish. It's uncomfortable and seems inefficient, too. I think it would be different if we had some native speakers in our group – then we might be more motivated to really try. What experience have you guys had with conversation groups? Any tips?